REMARKS

Claims 36 to 47 remain pending in the application, of which Claims 36, 40 and 44, the independent claims herein, have been amended. Favorable review and early passage to issue are respectfully requested.

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 2, 2003. In that Office Action, Claims 36 to 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. In an Advisory Action dated April 24, 2003, the rejections were indicated as being withdrawn based on arguments presented in a Response To Final Office Action dated April 2, 2003 and Applicant thanks the Examiner for the withdrawal.

Claims 36 to 47 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,287,194 (Lobiondo) and two references incorporated therein by reference, namely, U.S. Patent No. 5,130,806 (Reed) and U.S. Patent No. 5,036,361 (Filion). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns selecting an image output apparatus from among a plurality of image output apparatuses. According to the invention, selection conditions, which are associated with printing and capable of being designated by an operator, are limited within a range defined by a sum of functions each provided by at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses. A display device displays the limited selection conditions such that the operator can designate a desired selection condition. Then, a plurality of logical interfaces, for transmitting the print data directly to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses, are constructed within the workstation, where each of the plurality of logical interfaces respectively corresponds to the plurality of image

output apparatuses. Finally, the generated print data is assigned to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses that is selected based on a selection condition designated by the operator and information which is stored in advance and which indicates print functions of the plurality of image output apparatuses.

As a result, the selection conditions that the operator can designate are limited within a range defined by a sum of functions each provided by at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses so that at least one of the apparatuses satisfies a selection condition, and such that only the limited selection conditions are displayed for designation by the operator.

With specific reference to the claims, amended independent Claim 36 is a data processing apparatus having a printer driver for generating print data in accordance with a print request issued by an application program and assigning the generated print data to one of a plurality of image output apparatuses. The data processing apparatus has a limiting means for limiting selection conditions, which are associated with printing and capable of being designated by an operator, within a range defined by a sum of functions each provided by at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses. A control means controls a display device to display the selection conditions limited by the limiting means in a form such that the operator can designate a desired selection condition. A constructing means constructs, within the data processing apparatus, a plurality of logical interfaces, for transmitting the print data directly to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses, where each of the plurality of logical interfaces respectively corresponds to the plurality of image output apparatuses. The generated print data is then assigned to one of the plurality of image output apparatuses that is selected based on a selection condition designated by

the operator and information which is stored in advance and which indicates print functions of the plurality of image output apparatuses.

Amended independent Claims 40 and 44 are method and memory medium claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 36.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 36, 40 and 44. More particularly, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of limiting selection conditions, which are associated with printing and capable of being designated by an operator, within a range defined by a sum of functions each provided by at least one of a plurality of image output apparatuses, and controlling a display device to display the limited selection conditions in a form such that the operator can designate a desired selection condition.

Lobiondo is merely seen to disclose a printshop scheduler that schedules and distributes a job among a plurality of printers based upon information such as a time when the job is to be completed. If a requested completion time does not allow printing of a print job by a single printer, the print job is allocated to a plurality of available printers instead. However, Lobiondo is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of limiting selection conditions, which are associated with printing and capable of being designated by an operator, within a range defined by a sum of functions each provided by at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses, and controlling a display device to display the limited selection conditions in a form such that the operator can designate a desired selection condition

Reed is merely seen to disclose that printing functions, such as image shifting, logo addition, or use of a special print medium, are selectable options. Moreover,
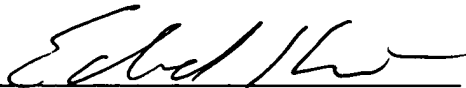
Reed's Figure 7 is merely seen to disclose a conventional user interface that displays a job ticket depicting various job selections that have been programmed. A job scorecard displayed on the screen merely shows basic instructions to the system for printing the job. However, it is not seen where Reed discloses that the selected conditions are limited within a range defined by a sum of functions each provided by at least one of a plurality of image output apparatuses. That is, all of the selection conditions depicted in Figure 7 of Reed appear to merely be standard conditions that may be selected by the user even if an apparatus is incapable of performing a selected condition. Accordingly, the conditions are not seen to be limited as claimed in Claims 36, 40 and 44. Further, there does not appear to be any disclosure in Reed that the display only depicts the limited selection conditions. Rather, it appears that Reed displays all possible conditions, regardless of whether or not an apparatus can perform the condition. As such, Lobiondo and the incorporated Reed, are not seen to disclose the features of the present invention.

Filion is not seen to add anything to overcome the deficiencies of Lobiondo and Reed and is also not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of limiting selection conditions, which are associated with printing and capable of being designated by an operator, within a range defined by a sum of functions each provided by at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses, and controlling a display device to display the limited selection conditions in a form such that the operator can designate a desired selection condition.

In view of the foregoing deficiencies of the applied art, all of Claims 36 to 47 are believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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